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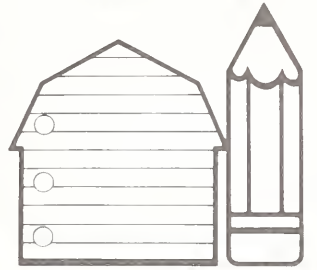
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# Ag in the Classroom

## Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

May/June 1989  
Vol. 4, No. 4

### San Francisco Nation's First School District To Have Full-Time AITC Coordinator

In a precedent-setting move, the San Francisco Unified School District has created a full-time position responsible solely for promoting Ag in the Classroom (AITC) inside district schools.

According to Ramon Cortines, superintendent of schools, agriculture is an essential ingredient of a well-balanced education for today's students. "I think that many city students are not aware of the whole economic issue of agriculture," he says. "They are not aware of how farm and rural life affects them day by day, and how much similarity there is [between rural and urban life] rather than difference."

Mayan Chang, a high school teacher with the district for eighteen years, will assume the role of AITC coordinator. Chang will work with the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) and the California Farm Bureau Federa-

tion to incorporate agricultural information into San Francisco's curriculum.

"We are pleased with the leadership San Francisco Unified has displayed by taking this substantial step toward achieving agricultural literacy," says Mark Linder, executive director of CFAITC. "To our knowledge, this is the first major urban school district to address the problem of ag illiteracy by designating a full-time position specifically for AITC. We're excited about the potential for accomplishment and growth."

Chang is no newcomer to agricultural education. Since 1984, she has led groups of high school students on a three-day, two-night field trip to rural California counties to experience agriculture firsthand. While there, the teenagers stay with farm families and tour a California State University

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California Foundation For  
Agriculture In The Classroom

### Minor Breeds, Major Interest!

Dr. Doolittle talked to his share of bizarre animals, but he probably did not count among them a "Fainting Goat" or a "Poitou Ass." And unlike the good doctor's exotic collection of acquaintances, these two creatures really exist, if only in small numbers.

You'll find out all about them, and over 60 other rare species, in the *Minor Breeds Notebook*, a publication of The American Minor Breeds Conservancy.

The organization counts over 2500 members, half of whom are breeders of rare livestock animals. The Conservancy's task is to register breeds recognized in North America around the turn of the century, when these animals made a vital contribution to American agriculture.



The term "minor breed" refers not to the animal's stature, but to the fact that relatively few exist in the world today. In 1985, the organization conducted a census of livestock to determine which breeds of sheep, cattle, horses, goats, and pigs were in decline or in danger of extinction, and placed their findings in five categories, from "rare" to "watch."

Among the animals under "watch," meaning that

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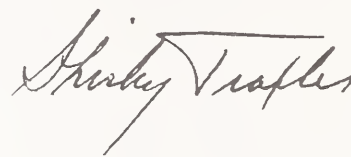
## From the Director

Dear Readers,

*Almost every day I am asked questions about various aspects of our Ag in the Classroom program. One of the most frequent is "How can I get on the "Notes" mailing list?" The answer is, just ask and we'll add your name to the list. Another common question is, "How did Ag in the Classroom get started?" So included below is a brief history of the program.*

*We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the national conference in June!*

Yours truly,



Shirley Traxler

## The History of Ag in the Classroom

Throughout much of the history of the United States, agriculture and education have been closely related. During the decades when most Americans lived on farms or in small towns, students often did farm chores before and after school, and indeed, the school year was determined by planting, cultivating, and harvesting schedules. Old school books are full of agricultural references and examples, because farming and farm animals were a familiar part of almost every child's life.

In the 1920's, 30's and 40's, as the farm population shrank and agricultural emphasis decreased in school books and educational materials, educators focused on agriculture as an

environment alive during a period when interest by the public as a whole was decreasing.

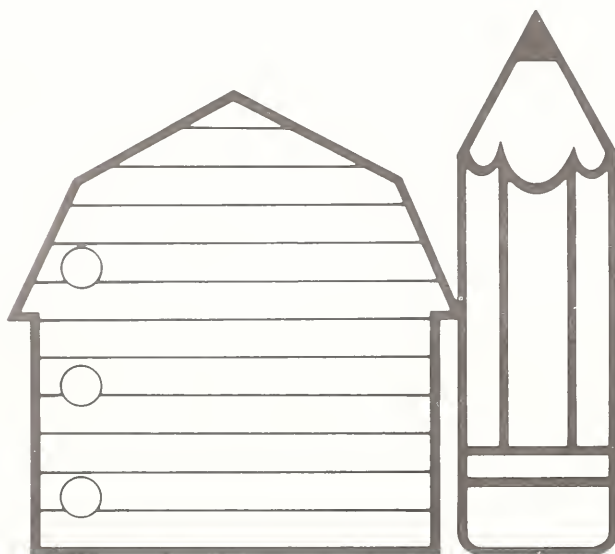
During the 60's and 70's, experienced agriculture, conservation, and forestry organizations realized the need for quality materials. Many excellent films, literature, and classroom aids were financed and produced by businesses, foundations, nonprofit groups and associations, as well as State and Federal agencies. But there was little coordination of effort, little exchange of ideas among the groups, and no central point for national coordination.

In 1981, representatives of agricultural groups and educators came to a meeting in Washington, D.C., at the invitation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to discuss agricultural literacy. A national task force was selected from this group with representation from agriculture, business, education and governmental agencies, some of whom were already conducting educational programs in agriculture.

The task force recommended that the U.S.D.A should be the coordinator and that it should sponsor regional meetings to help States organize their own programs. They also urged the Department to encourage the support of the national groups. As a result, AITC has the endorsement of all living former Secretaries of Agriculture, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the National Conference of State Legislatures, most of the Governors of the States, and the major agricultural organizations and commodity groups.

The task force wisely decided that agricultural literacy must be addressed at the State and local level, and they developed a State Action Plan to help States initiate their programs. These plans provided the focus at five regional conferences sponsored by USDA.

Interested groups in each State responded by creating a State task force. Significant progress has been made through these partnerships of agriculture, business, education, government and dedicated volunteers. This broad based support is a key element to making AITC a successful program.



occupational specialty, rather than as an integral part of almost every student's life. Agriculture education was mainly offered to those few students who wanted to make a career of agriculture.

During this period, a small nucleus of educators and others persistently pushed for more agriculture in education. They recognized the interlocking role of farming and food and fiber production with environmental quality, including wildlife habitat, clean water, and the preservation and improvement of forests. They kept interest in agriculture and the



# Spotlight

## Chicago Teacher Incorporates Ag with Ease

Early this year, fourth grade teacher Iris Solal was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Illinois Committee on Agricultural Education. Her goal was to use the money to demonstrate how easily agricultural education can be incorporated into the curriculum. And it didn't take long to reach that goal.

"I used the money for field trips and various classroom projects. Now it seems everything my students talk about is agriculture!" says Solal.

So far, Solal's students have seen the inner workings of a supermarket, food processing at the Vienna Sausage Company, and agricultural products loaded onto a barge at the Illinois National Port. "These trips show my students that agriculture is more than farming."

Solal has used her creative touch to blend agriculture into almost every subject, including geography, science, and language arts. "Our fourth grade curriculum is already structured to show how geographical influences affect the development of the U.S. By teaching children the agricultural trends of each region, they can understand the economic development of the country as a whole," she explains.

As for her science lessons, Solal uses a "plant mobile" she purchased with the grant money. "The plant mobile is a 3-tiered shelf with grow lights.

Right now we're growing zucchini, tomatoes, parsley, basil, green peppers — even flowers for Mother's Day. Plant growth and development is an integral part of 4th grade science. So when our seeds sprout in their little pots, the children have a visual demonstration that far surpasses any picture in a textbook.

"My students are city children," Solal continues, "and they had no idea where seeds came from until they saw the growing process itself. One student brought in a giant zucchini for our 'Seeds for Tomorrow' project. We promptly turned it into a nutrition lesson and a marvelous zucchini stew for lunch!"

Solal believes her students' favorite ag-incorporated subject, though, is Language Arts. Throughout the school year, her class corresponds with its adopted "farm grandma," Alma Denny, of Minier, Illinois. "As the culminating activity of our year-long study of agriculture," says Solal, "we will take a trip to Alma Denny's farm. The children will get to see, with their own eyes, the developing corn and tassels still inside their stalks. But most of all — as my students discovered last year — their hearts were invaded by Alma Denny's love of the land and our proud heritage of the midwest prairies," she says.



Iris Solal



"We tend real plants and study plant models," says Iris Solal of her classroom activities.



## South Dakota Celebrates a Century of Country Schools

Thirty five miles east of Rapid City, one teacher and eight students are discovering "agciting ways" to celebrate South Dakota's 100th year of statehood.

But these proud South Dakotans have more than their home State in common: they make up the entire population of Harmony School, a two-room, K-7 country school.

Harmony teacher Cleo Thelen, South Dakota's 1988 Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year, decided the most interesting way to celebrate the State centennial would be to explore a century of country schools. "There aren't many country schools left, so I thought it would be appropriate to compare our school to country schools of years ago," Thelen says.

According to the South Dakota Department of Education, in 1988 there were 115 remaining rural

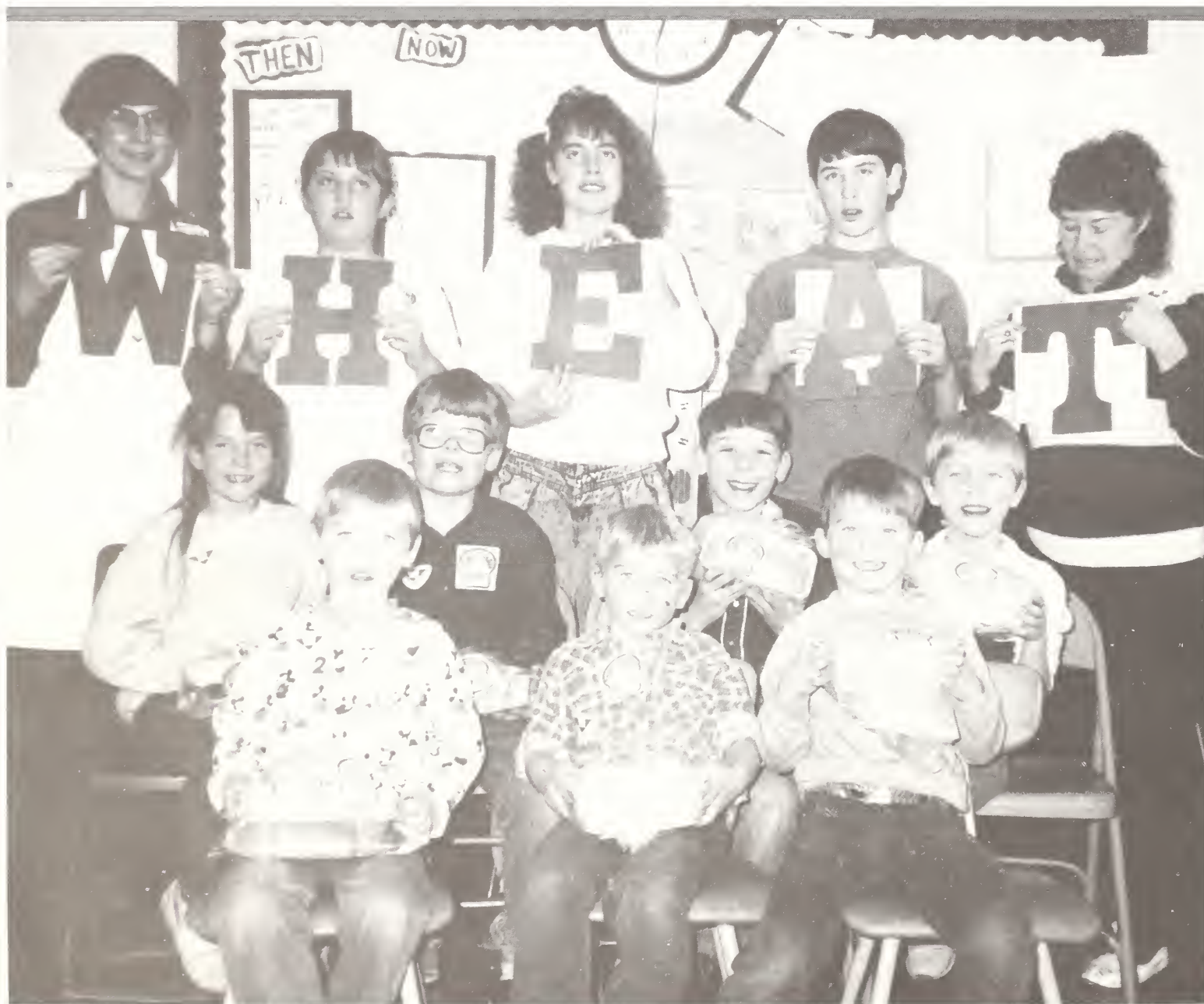
schools in the State; the majority have closed due to consolidation.

Thelen's class is compiling a book about rural education. The students are writing to well-known and successful people in the State, asking them to highlight their most memorable country school experiences. "We're reaching out to all kinds of people — high notables, farmers and others. All of them say their country school backgrounds have provided them with a sound education," she comments.

Some of the people who have responded include the South Dakota Lieutenant Governor, who attended country school just a few miles north of Harmony; a former Secretary of Agriculture; and a former Secretary of State.

In addition to compiling the book, Thelen has also promoted South Dakota agriculture by inviting

After a day of bread-making, Harmony students pose with teacher Cleo Thelen (far right) and South Dakota Wheat Commission nutrition specialist Joyce Koth (far left).



various people to her school. "A good way to reach students is to have resource people come to class."

One was Joyce Koth, Product Promotion Director at the South Dakota Wheat Commission. Koth participated in the "Celebrate a Century of Country Schools" project. The students observed wheat grinding and used the freshly milled flour to make bread. The program, which is sponsored by the commission and promoted by Ag in the Classroom, is complemented by a video depicting the history of wheat production and promoting the nutritional value of wheat.

"Agriculture is a major part of our country school celebration, and of course it's important to South Dakota," says Thelan. "I'm happy to teach my students about agriculture, and they're thrilled with everything they have learned."



## Sunflower Honey Wheat Bread

### Bread-Making-In-A-Bag™

Makes three 1 lb. loaves

**5 cups South Dakota all purpose flour**  
**2 cups South Dakota whole wheat flour**  
**1 cup South Dakota sunflower seeds**  
**½ cup South Dakota honey**  
**2¼ cups warm water (105°—115° F.)**  
**2 packages active dry yeast**  
**½ cup margarine**  
**½ cup nonfat dry milk**  
**1 tablespoon salt (optional)**

Combine in plastic bag (2 gallon heavy duty freezer bag):

**1 cup warm water**  
**2 packages active dry yeast**  
**½ cup honey**  
**1 cup all purpose flour**

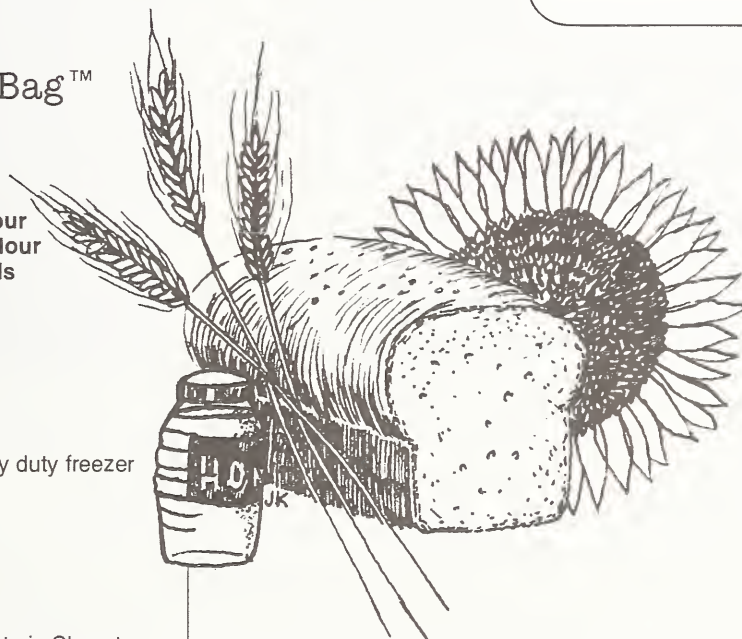
Squeeze upper part of bag to force out air. Close top of bag tightly between thumb and index finger. Rest bag on table; mix by working bag with fingers about 20 seconds or until all ingredients are completely blended.

Add remaining ingredients:

**1¼ cups warm water**  
**½ cup nonfat dry milk**  
**1 tablespoon salt**  
**½ cup softened margarine**

Mix by working bag with fingers. Gradually add whole wheat flour (2 cups); add sunflower seeds (1 cup). Gradually add remaining all-purpose flour until a stiff dough is formed, about 4 cups, or until dough pulls away from bag. Reserve about ¼ cup flour to use during the kneading process.

Turn dough out on lightly floured surface. Divide dough into thirds, using a bread scraper. (May also divide in half and bake in two 9x5x3-inch loaf pans.)



Knead each third about 8 minutes, or until dough is smooth and elastic. Add a little more flour, only if necessary to keep the dough from sticking.

Cover with plastic mixing bag. Let rise 30 minutes, or until double in bulk. Flatten dough into a 12x7-inch rectangle. At narrow end, fold corners to center to form a point. Beginning with point, roll dough tightly towards you. Pinch the edges to seal. Press dough at each end to seal and fold ends under.

Place seam side down in a greased 8½x4½x2¼-inch loaf pan. Repeat with second and third loaf.

Cover loosely with plastic bag and let rise in warm place 45-60 minutes or until doubled. Bread should be about 1½ inches above the side of the pan. Uncover. Bake on lower rack in 400° F. oven 30-35 minutes or until golden brown. You may want to cover loosely with aluminum foil the last 10-15 minutes to prevent crust from becoming excessively brown. Remove from pan immediately. Cool on rack.



## San Francisco

*continued from page 1*

campus and farm.

"This program has been an excellent eye-opener for the students who participate each year," says Chang. "It has molded their outlook on life to include agriculture as a real and necessary ele-

ment. It is our intent to expand such programs, so many more students can realize agriculture's connection with today's lifestyles."

Chang will also develop a field-trip procedures manual for use in school districts nationwide and incorporate Farm & Food Bytes Computer software into elementary and middle schools. She plans to increase participation in the Farm Day program as well.

## Minor Breeds

*continued from page 1*

the breed has shown a steady decline in the last 25 years, is the Fainting Goat. Also referred to as the "Wooden Leg," this unusual animal arrived in Tennessee from its home in Nova Scotia around 1880. Its name is derived from a hereditary condition known as "myotonia," a muscle defect which causes the animal's muscles to contract, but not relax, when startled. The goat becomes rigid and can fall down, giving the appearance of having fainted.

The *American Minor Breeds Notebook* gives a detailed description of each animal, tracing its origins in North America to its whereabouts today. Names and addresses of clubs and registries are provided for those seeking more information about the breeds, and pictures accompany the text.

For copies of the *American Minor Breeds Notebook*, contact the American Minor Breeds Conservancy, P.O. Box 477, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312. Also available is the North American Livestock Census, and "Preserving Our Livestock Heritage," a 15-minute slide/tape program, for rent or purchase.

### AMERICAN MINOR BREEDS NOTEBOOK



THE AMERICAN MINOR BREEDS CONSERVANCY

## Maryland Forms Corporation To Promote Ag Education

In response to recommendations of the State's Commission on Education in Agriculture, Maryland is ready to strengthen its Ag in the Classroom program.

The Commission presented Governor William Donald Schaefer a proposed model for education in Maryland, noting that the program needs cooperation between the State and the agricultural industry.

To cover the costs of implementing the Commission's recommendations, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Wayne A. Cawley, Jr., formed a corporation appropriately named, "Fund for Agricultural Education and Resource Materials in Maryland Schools."

The corporation is represented by individuals from both the public and private sectors, including the Secretary of Agriculture, the Chancellor of the University of Maryland System, the State Superin-

tendent of Schools and corporate executives from agricultural industries.

According to Thomas F. Filbert, Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Department of Agriculture, the corporation has formed two committees: the Fundraising Strategies Committee and the Educational Needs Committee.

"These committees have begun exploring how they intend to meet their established goals. The Fundraising Strategies Committee, for example, has been discussing the possibility of holding an annual dinner to promote Ag in the Classroom. The Educational Needs Committee has been considering grants for teacher training in agricultural education.

"Right now, we're on the first rung of the ladder," Filbert notes, "but once the corporation raises funds, we can put our ideas to work."



# "TAG Ag"

When the State of Texas required its schools to develop a program for talented and gifted (TAG) students, the Texas Farm Bureau heard opportunity knocking.

Their response was "TAG Ag," which made its debut in fourth grade classrooms last fall.

"We develop material as we see the need for it," said Linda Nowell, education coordinator for the Texas Farm Bureau. "We target what we feel will be most useful to the teachers."

"TAG Ag" is a companion to the Texas Ag Resources Guide currently used in the State's schools. All activities meet the Texas Education Essential Elements and can also be used in the standard classroom as well as with TAG students. Each lesson plan states objectives, procedures and activities. It is divided into the same five categories as the resource guide: an introduction, history, economics, geography and ecology.

In the history module, students dry fruit to learn about food preservation methods of the past. While studying economics, the class dissects a fast food burger — from its plastic container to the beef itself. Students plant and watch a garden grow in the ecology module, and learn the geography of the State's coastal plains while playing a game called "Fish Follies."

Over 200 instructors, representing about 15% of the State's school districts, are presently using the supplement, which was introduced last September at a Statewide convention of school boards and administrators. For the most part, though, the Farm Bureau relies on its 216 county bureaus to spread information about new materials and teaching aids such as "TAG Ag." In June, they will report back to the State office with comments on the success of the program. "Thus far," reports Nowell, "the response has been favorable."

A sampling of some activities prepared for Texas talented and gifted (TAG) fourth-graders.

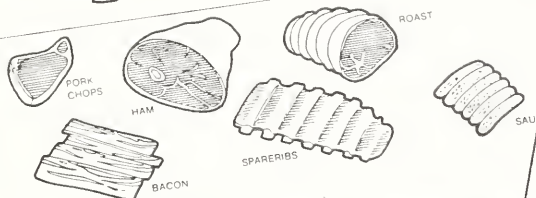
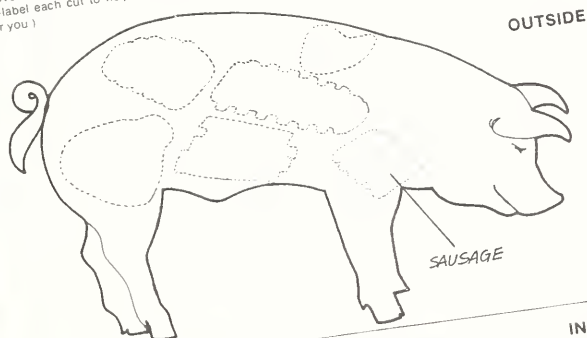
## MEET THE MEAT TREATS

In the farmer's ANIMAL KINGDOM there are two mighty, meaty creatures we'd like you to know — both inside and out! One day soon, we'll say hello to the KING OF CATTLE. But today,

PLEASE MEET "PRINCE PIG"



**DIRECTIONS** At the bottom of the page, you will find some of the favorite "cuts" or kinds of meat that are obtained from the pig. Cut out each one and place it over the proper place on the outside of the pig where it would be found. Then re-label each cut to help you remember it. (Sausage has already been labeled for you.)



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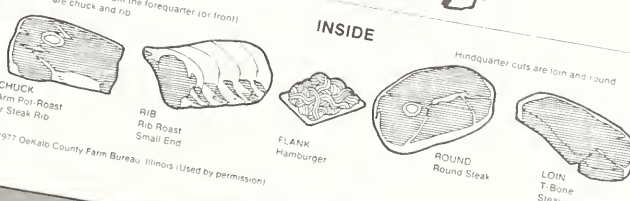
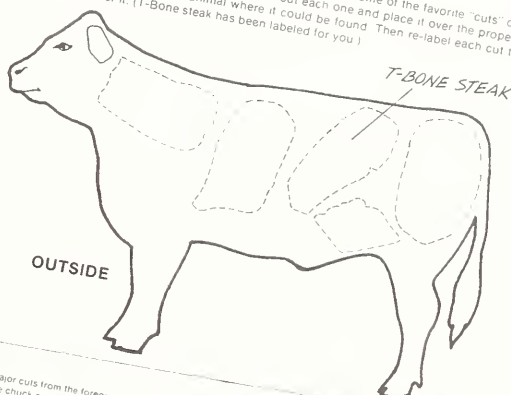
54 TAG Fourth Grade

## INTRODUCING THE CATTLE KING

BEEF CATTLE are among the most important farm animals. Each American eats an average of 107 pounds per year of roast beef, veal, hamburger, hot dogs, and other beef products. American farmers sell more beef than any other product. So beef cattle are truly the "Kings" of the American farm.

**WHO NEEDS A KING?** We ALL need the Cattle King. Why do you think that we need him? (How many of your class said for hamburgers?) Here is another important reason. About 83% of our land can't be used to grow crops for humans to eat. But grass that feeds cattle grows on almost 1-2 of that land. Without King Cattle, a great deal of our land could not be used to grow food.

**DIRECTIONS** At the bottom of the page, you will find some of the favorite "cuts" or kinds of meat that are obtained from cattle. Cut out each one and place it over the proper place on the outside of the beef animal where it could be found. Then re-label each cut to help you remember it. (T-Bone steak has been labeled for you.)



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TAG AG 55

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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